



Smokey and staff help celebrate 20 years of the "Alaska Center" in Anchorage

# Wildlands Update for September

## General Recreation Notes

Changes are in the air as fall in Alaska begins. Watch for bears while berry-picking and fishing. Raptor migration is at its peak along the Turnagain Arm. Watch for bald eagles, northern harriers, and sharp-shinned hawks. Keep your distance as moose begin their rut. Please observe outdoor safety by wearing personal flotation devices on the water and being prepared for weather changes. To view the weather at your destination, check the web cams at <http://akweathercams.faa.gov/allcams.php>.

## Road Closures

The Glenn Highway continues to be closed from Milepost 92-97 from midnight to 6:00am weekdays, but WILL be open Labor Day 9/3 and also 9/4. Plan for delays, usually 30min to 1hr, as there is road construction and repair on all major highways. For updated road conditions throughout the state, visit <http://511.alaska.gov/> or dial 511 in Alaska, (866) 282-7577 outside Alaska.

## Alaska State Parks

Many state parks will close on September 17 including Bird Creek, Eagle River Campground, Eklutna Lake, Finger Lake, and Big Lake North. Matanuska Glacier closes 9/30 and Kepler-Bradley on 10/1. Make plans NOW for a public use cabin at Christmas. Check out additional closures at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/>

## Chugach State Park:

Albert Loop Trail at Eagle River Nature Center is closed until freeze-up or hibernations. Brown bear and their cubs are feeding on spawning salmon, using the bridges and beaver dams as fishing platforms and the adjacent brush and woods as cover. In the 1990's, five people were mauled in separate incidents on this trail. Since the seasonal closure, no maulings have occurred. The Iditarod/Crow Pass Trail, the Rodak Loop and viewing platforms, and the Dew Mound Trail remain open. For current information please call (907) 345-5014.

## Matsu Area State Parks

Independence Mine: The road over Hatcher Pass will remain open until snowfall closes it for the season (usually in late September). The visitor center closes for the season on 9/4. Blueberries are weak this year, but will ripen after the first frost. Call (907) 745-8950 for information. Nancy Lake State Recreation Area: For current information call (907) 495-6273.

## Denali State Park:

Upper Troublesome Creek trail is still washed out at mile 4. Trailheads are posted with advisories pertaining to flood damage from last year. Bears sightings are also common in this area. Lower Troublesome and Byers Lake Trail are great places to view salmon spawning. The Byers Lake parking area will remain open to the public until snowfall; cabins are available year-round. For more information about Matsu Area State Parks, call (907) 745-3975.

## Kenai Peninsula Parks

Kachemak Bay: A couple of female bears with cubs have been sighted at Saddle Trail and the Grewingk Valley. If encountered, please give them space. Bears have also been seen around Poot Peak, Humpy Creek, and Emerald Lake areas. The Moose Creek bridge at China Poot Lake is out; cross with caution. A listing of trail conditions is available at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/trailcondition.htm> or call (907) 262-5581.

Caines Head: The trail to the park remains damaged from last year's flooding. The Derby Cove cabin is closed until further notice for repairs. See comments at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/cabins/kenai.htm>

## Alaska Department of Fish and Game

National Geographic's web cam at McNeil River will continue to broadcast until the bears disperse at the end of the salmon runs. Visit <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wildcamgrizzlies/index.html> for great bear-viewing. Beluga whales

## Some good websites

**Alaska outdoor information:**

<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

**Alaska weather information:**

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

**Alaska Volcano Observatory :**

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

**Sunrise-Sunset:**

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/>

**Road Conditions:**

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>

continue to follow spawning salmon up Turnagain Arm.

## **Bureau of Land Management**

Swede Lake Trail off the Denali Highway is open. Please be aware this area was recently closed with the discovery of unexploded ordinance, so stick to the trail. The Denali Highway is generally open until October 1st or the first heavy snowfall. BLM recommends travelers not attempt to cross the highway after this date due to the possibility of snow.

## **National Park Service**

### **Kenai Fjords National Park**

The information center near the small boat harbor remains open daily until September 4 when hours will change to 9:00am-5:00pm daily for the rest of September. All ranger-led programs end on Labor Day; the last guided hike to the Harding Icefield (7-8 hours) will take place on September 1. Call (907) 224-2125 for more information. For further park and cabin information, visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>.

### **Denali National Park and Preserve**

Park shuttle buses end September 14; interpretive tour buses end September 19. Winners of the September 14-17 Denali road lottery are listed on the Denali web site. Military Appreciation Day (400 free permits for military personnel) will be on September 18. Permits will be distributed from military venues. The Denali Visitor Center and Wilderness Access Center begin modified hours on September 18. Riley Creek Campground and the Murie Science and Learning Center remain open year-round. For more information, call (907) 683-2294 or visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/dena>

## **Fish and Wildlife Service**

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Trails and the canoe route in the refuge are in good condition. Beginning Labor Day, visitor center hours are 8:00am-5:00pm on weekdays and 10:00am-5:00pm on weekends. For more information, please go to <http://kenai.fws.gov/>

## **National Forest Service**

### **Chugach National Forest**

Portage Valley has construction along part of the new Trail of Blue Ice and there has been a brown bear active near the day lodge. The Alaska Railroad is offering a two-for-one for the new whistle-stop service from Portage to Spencer Glacier (thru 9/16). Check out this special at [www.akrr.com](http://www.akrr.com), (907) 265-2620 or toll free (800) 544-0542. For more info on the forest, call the Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242 or the Seward Ranger District (907) 224-3374. For internet updates visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>.

## **Urban Public Lands**

### **Municipality of Anchorage and the MatSu Borough**

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Fall Activity Guide will be published in early September. Centennial Campground will close 9/7. Registration for Jr. Nordic will be available in late September. Be bear aware: Even in municipal parks, you may encounter a bruin. For more information, visit <http://www.muni.org/parks/>

## **Southcentral Visitor Centers**

### **Eagle River Nature Center**

Located at mile 12 of Eagle River Road, ERNC is open Tuesday - Sunday 10am-5pm. The visitor center offers a wide variety of programs. There is a \$5.00 parking fee not covered by the Alaska State Parks day use pass. Call (907) 694-2108 for more information or check their website at <http://www.ernc.org>

### **Campbell Creek Science Center**

The visitor center is open Monday through Friday 7:30am-4pm. Fireside Chats will resume the third Wednesdays of the month at 7:00pm. For more information, call (907) 267-1247 or check the website at <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html>

### **Begich-Boggs Visitor Center**

The Center will remain open 9:00am-6:00pm through September; programs and hikes are offered until the end of September. Call (907) 783-2326 for

more information or visit the website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>

### **Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center**

The visitor center is open daily 9:00am to 6:00pm through Labor Day, reopening Tuesdays-Sundays from 10:00am-5:00pm until October 1st. September 22 the refuge will celebrate the 20th birthday of the research vessel M/V Tiglax. September 29th is National Estuaries Day. For more information and other programs call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandoocean.org>

## **Alaska Public Lands Information Centers**

The **Downtown Anchorage** location is open 9am-5pm daily until Labor Day when it will be open Monday-Friday only. Stop by to enjoy the exhibits, special programs, and movies. HD footage from McNeil River is available for viewing on a big screen monitor. Special 2:00pm programs include a gold-panning demonstration (Mondays), Anchorage Audubon: Mystery of Migration (Tuesdays); Alaska SeaLife Center: Marine Mammals of Alaska (Wednesdays), a live animal from the Alaska Zoo (Thursdays); Dog-sledding 101 (Fridays) until September 14. The Captain Cook walking tour will be offered periodically during the month at 11:00am and 2:30pm; please call ahead to verify dates of the walk. Call (907) 644-3661 (a new phone number for the visitor center) or go to <http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

The **Fairbanks** location is daily from 9am-6:00pm through September 15. Hours after that date will be 10:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday. Call (907) 456-0527 for more information on programs and daily movies.

The **Tok Center** location is open 8:00am to 7:00pm daily through Labor Day. Winter hours will be 8:00am-4:30pm Monday-Friday. Call (907) 883-5667 for more information or (888) 256-6784 for Alaska Marine Highway reservations.

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